

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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CL 2006/22-FL  
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**TO:** Codex Contact Points  
Interested International Organizations

**FROM:** Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
FAO, 00100 Rome, Italy

**SUBJECT:** **Labelling of Foods and Food Ingredients Obtained through Certain Techniques of Genetic Modification / Genetic Engineering**

**DEADLINE:** 1 October 2006

**COMMENTS:**

To:

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The 34<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on Food Labelling considered the Labelling of Foods and Food Ingredients Obtained through Certain Techniques of Genetic Modification / Genetic Engineering. (Draft Amendment to the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (Draft Recommendations for the Labelling of Foods Obtained through Certain Techniques of Genetic Modification / Genetic Engineering): Definitions and Proposed Draft Guidelines for the Labelling of Foods and Food Ingredients Obtained through Certain Techniques of Genetic Modification / Genetic Engineering: Labelling Provisions) and discussed how to proceed further in this area.

After an extensive discussion, the Committee agreed to hold a physical working group in Norway with Norway, Argentina and Ghana as co-chairs. The Committee agreed on the following objectives and terms of reference for the Working Group:

The objective of the Working Group is to assist the Codex Committee on Food Labelling with guidance relating to the further development of the *Draft Proposed Guidelines for the Labelling of Food and Food Ingredients Obtained through Certain Techniques of Genetic Modification-Genetic Engineering*.

Within the mandate of Codex, the Working Group shall address the following areas:

1. Consideration of the rationale for Members' approach to the labelling of food and food ingredients obtained through certain techniques of genetic modification/genetic engineering.

2. Identify the current standards, regulations, acts/decrees, etc. among current Members with respect to the mandatory and voluntary labelling of foods and food ingredients obtained through certain techniques of genetic modification/genetic engineering.
3. Identify Members practical experiences in applying/implementing mandatory and voluntary labelling of food and food ingredients obtained through certain techniques of genetic modification/genetic engineering.
4. Identify communication strategies used in communicating information to the public on foods and food ingredients obtained through certain techniques of genetic modification/genetic engineering with particular reference to how Members label these foods.
5. The output CCFL may require to respond to items 1-4 above.

The Committee agreed that in undertaking this work, the Working Group should take into account information presented in:

- Existing proposed draft texts on the labelling of foods and food ingredients obtained from certain techniques of genetic modification/genetic engineering prepared by the Codex Committee on Food Labelling, and associated comments and committee reports.
- Relevant Codex texts such as, but not limited to, the *Codex Statements of Principle Concerning the Role of Science in the Codex Decision-Making Process and the Extent to Which Other Factors are Taken into Account* and the *Codex Working Principles for Risk Analysis for Application in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius*, particularly those sections relating to risk management and risk communication.
- The WHO document *20 Questions on Genetically Modified (GM) Foods*.

The Committee agreed that the Working Group would be held in January, 2007, and its report would be presented at the 35<sup>th</sup> Session of the CCFL. The Circular Letter requesting information on items 1 to 4 above should be issued to provide sufficient time for responses to be received in advance of the January, 2007 Working Group meeting.

The Committee noted that many delegations and observers expressed their interest in participation in the Working Group and recalled that physical working groups were open to all members and observers. For practical reasons, it was recommended that delegations should not exceed two participants (ALINORM 06/29/22, paras. 82-101).

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Members are therefore invited to provide information on points 1 to 4 above as agreed by the Committee. It would be preferable if comments would be sent in English.

The comments received will be considered in the physical working group that will be held at a date to be determined in January or February 2007. The invitation to the working group will be sent separately.

Comments should be sent in writing, preferably by email, to the above addresses, **before 1 October 2006**.